RESTORATIONS AT STOW CHURCH, LINCOLNSHIRE.

AT a meeting of the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire architectural societies held on the 17th ult. at Ripon, the Rev. George Atkinson read a paper (amongst various others) "On the Restorations in Progress at Stow Church," of which he is the incumbent.

The church of St. Mary, at Stow, in Lindsey, a village situated about ten miles north-west from Lincoln, though of considerable local fame, has not, until within a very few years past, been much known to persons at a distance. Besides the extreme singularity of its structure and general appearance, which could not fail to attract attention from all passers by, the uniform tradition prevailing all the country round, from time immemorial, that "Stow Church is the mother of Lincoln Minster," where the bishop had his seat before it was removed to Lincoln, invested the site of the structure itself with considerable interest, and the revival, which has so happily taken place, of knowledge and taste in regard especially to ecclesiastical architecture and antiquities, promoted and directed as it has been by institutions like the Architectural Societies of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, has latterly added much to the interest which had been felt in this remarkable monument of ancient piety. Stow church is of the cross form, without aisles, and having a central tower. Its interior dimensions are, in round numbers, 150 feet in length from east to west; of transept, from north to south, 82 feet; breadth of nave, 27 feet; of chancel, 24 feet; of transept, 23 feet; height of side walls, about 33 feet. On a first glance a practised eye would be led to pronounce it wholly a Norman church, with some insertions of pointed windows, and the substitution of a perpendicular tower for the original one. Its eastern and western portions would, on closer examination, confirm the impression, exhibiting, as they are found to do, the usual features of that style. After referring to the general character and aspect of the nave and chancel, Mr. Atkinson drew attention to the transept of the church, which was found to differ very remarkably in its constructive features, as it did in other respects, from the other two portions. He described the structural differences which led to the conclusion that the transept of this church exhibits an earlier and a later Saxon. During the meeting of the Archæological Institute at Lincoln, in the summer of 1848, a visit was made to the church by a large party of its members. Most of those who had not seen it before, came with a strong presentiment that they would find it to be nothing more than early Norman, but they were satisfied, after careful examination, that the transept had formed a portion of a Saxon church, and that of a much larger class than any other of which the remains now exist. This visit proved the happy occasion of giving practical effect to the wish which had long been felt in many quarters that an effort should be made to commence the restoration of this venerable structure. Earl Brownlow, the lord lieutenant of the county, president that year of the Archæological Institute, in conjunction with the bishop of the diocese and other eminent persons, set on foot a subscription, the proceeds of which, together with the contributions of the tithe-owners, are now being expended on the restoration of the chancel, and it is to be hoped that the means will eventually be found for putting the whole fabric into a sound state. Mr. Atkinson showed that the historical notices of Stow church which have been handed down strongly confirm the above conclusions, grounded on structural evidences only. He connected the church with the bishoprick of Lindsey, or Sidnacester, and glanced at the history of that see, which was founded in the year 678. Of the time or the cause of its extinction, there was no express record. William of Malmesbury, who wrote about the middle of the twelfth century, confesses that he had not been able to ascertain by what means it perished. However, it appeared that the see of Sidnacester was united to that of Dorchester, Oxon, in 949, after it had been vacant eighty years. This date might, in conjunction with the marks of fire found on the only remaining portion of the original cathedral, lead to a probable conjecture as to the cause of the long vacancy, viz., the destruction of the city and church by the Danes. He observed that the peculiar interest attaching to the transept of Stow church, arose from its being the only example now remaining of what a Saxon church of the largest class was; and certainly it was calculated to give a much more exalted idea of the handywork of our Saxon forefathers than they had commonly had credit for. What the original nave was in length or general structure, there were no means of determining; but from the traces of the foundations of the side walls, where they joined the transepts, it must have been twice the width of the present Norman nave, or more than fifty feet, and consequently must have had arcades and side walls. He next adverted to the chancel, the part at present undergoing restoration, and which, therefore, formed more properly the subject of the present paper. The whole of the original work above ground has been destroyed, but in the preparations for a repair of the foundations of the present Norman chancel some discoveries were made in respect to the ground plan of the original choir. These Mr. Atkinson minutely described, and also the use which had been made of them in determining upon the plan of restoration. The grand feature of this work was the restoration of the original stone vaulting, which was now far advanced. The prospect of seeing the vaulting restored at all was no little thing, but to see again the very same design in all respects, when neither memory nor tradition of what it had been, or indeed whether it had been, survived, appeared quite beyond all hope, and yet this was actually to be seen in the restoration. The only particular in which they were left to conjecture was as to what had been the arrangement of the several patterns as to order of place in the groining. Here they could have no guide, but the principle on which they had been arranged, as suggested by Mr. Pearson, the architect, was such as would, Mr. Atkinson thought, commend itself to all as probably the original one, viz., that they should be placed in the order of their richness, the richest being nearest the east end. There is one thing, said the rev. gentleman in conclusion, which this very ancient structure has often brought to my mind most strongly, and it will not, I trust, appear to you otherwise than as it does to me, well calculated to confirm us in our attachment to the Reformed Church of England,—I mean the testimony which it affords to the simplicity of the ritual of our church in those early times, compared with what it had gradually become for some ages before the Reformation. We can admire the beauty of many of those features which were subsequently introduced into our churches, but if any object to us, as a defect, that our present ritual does not require, scarcely admits of, the use of these things, we have in the structure to which I have invited your attention a ready and surely an efficient answer that they were equally unknown to our Saxon, and even to our early Norman predecessors in the Church of England. Some of these developments, as I may be permitted to call them, appear never to have found admission here at all: of the absence of the rest originally, as well as of the after introduction of some of them, several parts of the fabric bear witness. For instance, in the jambs of the side windows, north and south, of the altar space, there was a fracture and displacement of the mouldings exactly in the same place in each, occasioned, doubtless, by the insertion of a cross beam to support one of the lofty wood canopies which are often reared over the altar in Roman Catholic churches. The Saxon piers of the eastern tower arch are to be seen cut and channelled to allow of the insertion of the beams of a rood loft, and a winding staircase actually mined out through the north-east pier to afford access to it. A small recess within the church, near the north door of the nave, probably contained a holy water stoup, but its pointed arch marks its late origin; so likewise does the arch of a niche outside the western doorway, in which was probably placed a figure of the Virgin, in whose name the church is dedicated. Other comparative novelties might be enumerated, but let these suffice to show that English churchmen, while they feel it one of their highest duties, one of their happiest privileges, to aid in preserving, and restoring where needful, the sacred and venerable structures which our forefathers in the faith erected, have yet cause, in the midst of all our admiration of their wonderful beauty, to love and be satisfied with their own pure and simple worship as it has been reformed, in which, if they are less like to the later, they are all the more like to the earlier Church of England, as to the pure and primitive state of the Church universal itself.

CALCULATING MACHINES.

MR. BABBAGE had better look to his laurels. We lately remarked that were his calculating machines in the International Exhibition the public interest in them might be re-excited, and the means afforded him of completing them. Their place, we may almost say, has been occupied by another calculating machine, which, it appears, is completed, and, according to the *Daily News*, was examined the other day by the Governor of the Bank of England and some City friends. It is in the Russian Court, and is the invention of a Polish Jew named Staffel, a native of Warsaw. It works sums in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with a rapidity and precision, it is said, that is quite astonishing. It also performs the operation of extracting the square root and the most complicated sums in fractions. The machine, which the inventor calls "arithmetica instrumentalis," is about the size of an ordinary toilet, being about 18 inches by 9, and about 4 inches high. The external mechanism represents three rows of ciphers. The first and upper row, containing thirteen figures, is immoveable; the second and third, containing seven figures each, moveable. The words addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are engraved on a semi-circular ring to the right, and underneath is a hand which must be pointed to whichever operation is to be performed. The figures being properly arranged, a simple turn of a handle is then given, and the operation is performed at once as if by magic. The most singular power of the instrument is that if a question be wrongly stated, as, for instance, a greater number being placed for subtraction from a lesser, it detects the error, and the ringing of a small bell announces the discovery. The inventor has exhibited its powers to the Queen, Prince Albert, and several persons of distinction, and the experiments of Friday are said to have seemed quite satisfactory to the very competent judges who had assembled to witness them. The inventor also exhibited a curious machine for ascertaining by weighing the fineness of gold or silver. This also was much admired, but it is to be submitted to further and more severe test. Both machines are, to say the least, extremely curious, and have been rewarded with a silver medal by the Russian Government.

THE DWELLINGS OF THE THIBETAN CAPITAL.—The houses of Lassa are generally large, of many stories, and terminated with a terrace, slightly inclined, to facilitate the draining off of rain water. They are covered with whitewash, with the exception of some borders, and the frameworks of the doors and windows, which are painted red or yellow. The reformed Buddhists are particularly fond of these two colours: they are, so to speak, sacred in their eyes, and they call them Lama colours. The inhabitants of Lassa, having the custom of painting their houses every year, they are usually very clean, and always look as if newly built; but the insides are far from being in harmony with the fair appearance of the outside. The apartments are dirty, smoky, strong-smelling, and encumbered with furniture and utensils, thrown here and there in disgusting disorder. The Thibetan habitations are, in fact, nothing more than great whited sepulchres.—*Huc's Travels in Tartary, Thibet, and China.*

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